

# University of North Alabama PRESIDENT'S PROGRESS REPORT



*Prepared for*  
**Alabama Commission on Higher Education**  
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# University of North Alabama – President’s Progress Report

## Introduction

As the region’s oldest university, UNA is financially strong, physically beautiful, and academically rigorous. Furthermore, we are committed to the collaborative spirit found in Alabama’s *Statewide Goals for Higher Education* that ensures Alabama has an even brighter future ahead.

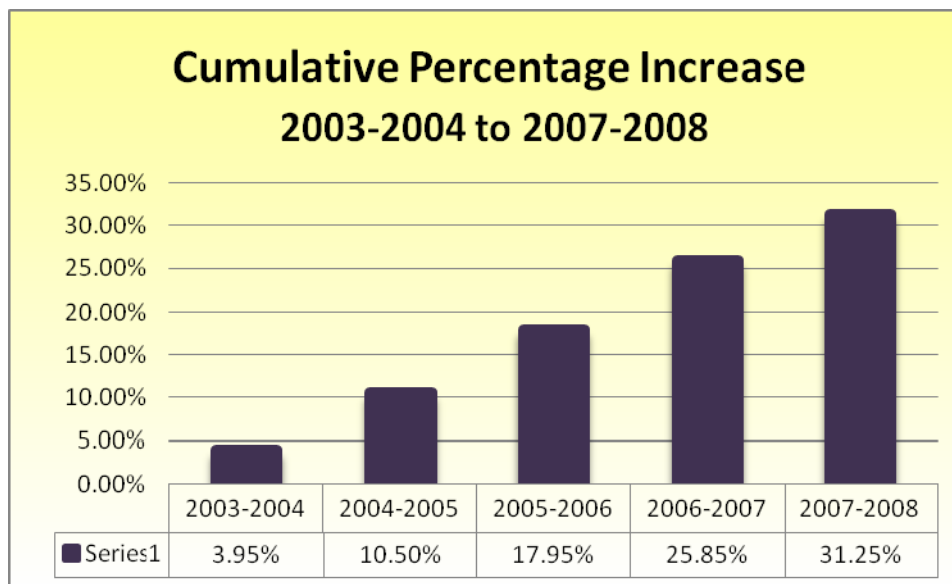
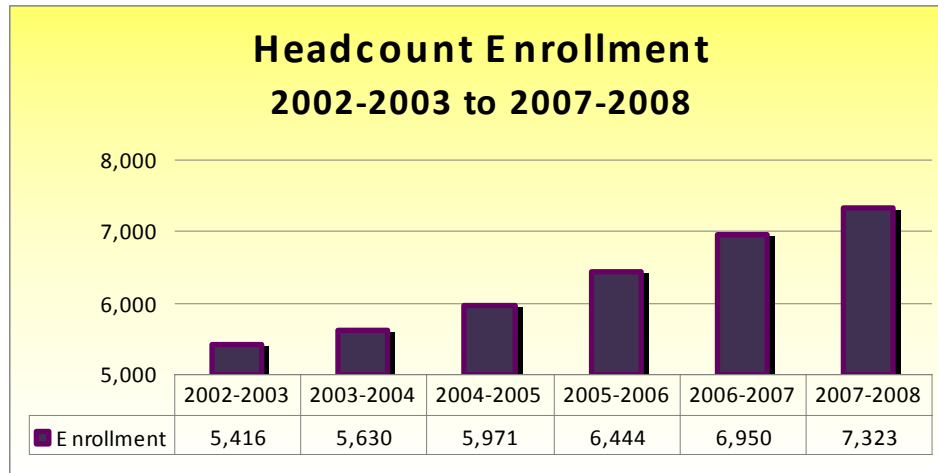
The University of North Alabama’s continued commitment to “*Changing Lives, Creating Futures*” has been further solidified this year as the institution realized record enrollments for the past three years, significantly increased workforce and co-operational opportunities throughout the region and tri-state area, and continued to promote and buttress quality academic programs for our students and our community.

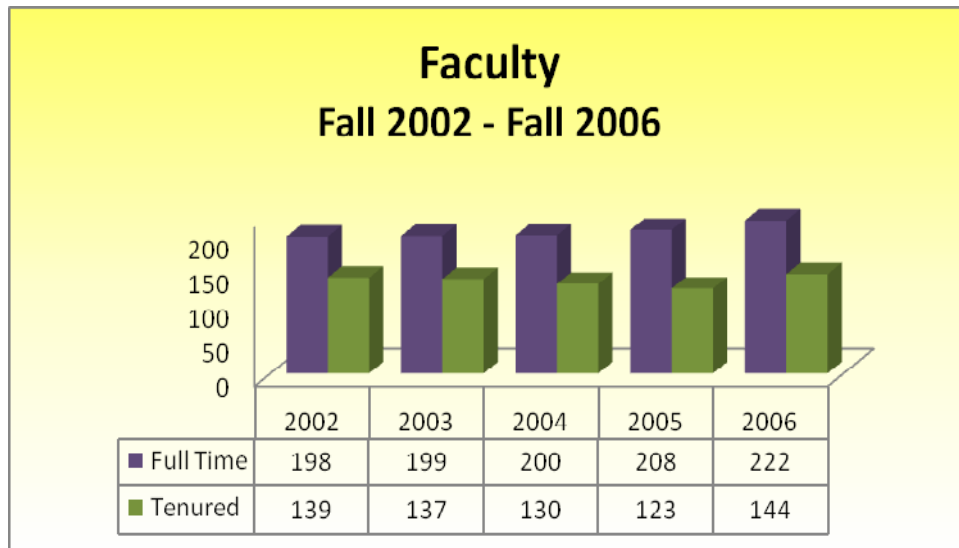
The University of North Alabama occupies a beautiful campus of over 130 acres in a residential section of Florence, Alabama. Florence is located just north of the Tennessee River and is the largest city in a four-city area that includes Tuscumbia, Sheffield, and Muscle Shoals. UNA serves as the educational and cultural hub for a tri-state region encompassing northwest Alabama, south central Tennessee, and northeast Mississippi. The entire metropolitan area has a combined population of approximately 140,000 people. The University of North Alabama, established in 1830 as LaGrange College, became in 1872 the first state-supported teachers’ college south of the Ohio River and one of the first College of Education institutions in the nation. The University of North Alabama has developed into a comprehensive regional university providing quality educational opportunities for students, with majors in four colleges – Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, and Nursing and Allied Health.

Graduate studies were introduced in 1957 with the establishment of master’s degree programs in education, and have been characterized by continued expansion: a sixth-year program in Education (1971), a Master of Business Administration degree program (1975), a Master of Science in Criminal Justice degree program (1994), a Master of Arts in English degree program (1999), a Master of Science in Nursing (on-line - 2006), and a Master of Science in History (2007).

## I. University Profile - Trend in Enrollment and Faculty 2002-03 to 2007-08

Since 2003, UNA has seen a significant increase in fall enrollment from 5,416 students to 7,323 students, representing an overall 35.2 percent cumulative increase in a five-year period. In order to keep up with this increased demand for classes and services, UNA has increased the number of faculty by over 12 percent during that same period.





- II. The University of North Alabama supports the State Higher Education Plan 2003-04 to 2008-09, not only in its Mission and Vision but also through various endeavors and activities as outlined on the following pages.**

## **Mission**

The University of North Alabama engages in teaching, research, and service in order to provide educational opportunities for students, an environment for discovery and creative accomplishment, and a variety of outreach activities meeting the professional, civic, social, cultural, and economic development needs of our region in the context of a global community.

## **Vision**

The University of North Alabama will build on nearly two centuries of academic excellence. We commit ourselves to design and offer a rich undergraduate experience; to respond to the many educational and outreach needs of our region, including the provision of high quality graduate programs in selected disciplines; to provide an extracurricular environment that supports and enhances learning; to provide a global education and participate in global outreach; and to foster a diverse and inclusive academic community. We promote global awareness by offering a curriculum that advances understanding of global interdependence, by encouraging international travel, and by building a multinational student population. We pledge to support and encourage intellectual growth by offering primarily small, interactive classes taught by highly educated professionals, and through mentoring, internships, and other out-of-class educational opportunities. *(Approved by UNA Board of Trustees, December 12, 2005)*

## Values Statement

The members of the community of the University of North Alabama do hereby establish and maintain a culture that:

- ◆ Adheres to personal academic and intellectual integrity;
- ◆ Embraces the diversity of cultural backgrounds, personal characteristics, and life situations represented in this community;
- ◆ Values an environment for the free expression of ideas, opinions, thoughts, and differences in people; and
- ◆ Respects the rights, dignity, and property of all.

The members of the community of the University of North Alabama will promote an atmosphere free of discrimination based on but not limited to the following: age, culture, ethnicity, gender, nationality, national origin, political affiliation, physical ability, physical attributes, race, religion, sexual orientation, and/or socio-economic status.

All members of the University community recognize that we are an integral part of the community and will respect, honor, and protect the freedom and dignity of all individuals. (*Approved by UNA Board of Trustees, June 12, 2006*)

## Statewide Goals for Higher Education

### Goal 1 – Access

**Elevate the educational attainment levels of all citizens.**

*University of North Alabama accomplishments:*

- ◆ Improving retention is an on-going goal of the University. To ensure that students succeed academically until graduation, support has been provided in areas such as the Advising Center, Writing Center, Learning Communities, and Honors Program.
- ◆ The University has implemented specific programs to increase access to higher education by underserved populations through the Presidential Mentoring Program and a federal grant from NIH entitled “Project Open” for minority students who wish to enter the health field.
- ◆ Since 2003, the number of students attending UNA from different states within the United States has increased 33 percent. During that same time, the number of students representing other countries increased 35 percent. Total FTE enrollment has increased almost 20 percent since 2000.

- ◆ UNA offers one of the lowest tuition rates in the state for undergraduate in-state and out-of-state students.
- ◆ The College of Business has initiated an on-line MBA program to make graduate study more accessible to working adults. In three years, enrollment has grown from one student to approximately 300.
- ◆ Within the College of Arts and Sciences, the baccalaureate program in Sociology is offered entirely on-line as well as on campus. This program is especially attractive to law enforcement and social service delivery professionals who live and work a significant distance from UNA.
- ◆ The College of Education adopted an on-line comprehensive management tool for students, faculty, and P-12 partners to improve communication and accessibility to resources for respective programs of study.
- ◆ The College of Nursing and Allied Health implemented a Master of Science in Nursing program completely on-line to allow nurses the attainment of the minimum qualifications to teach nursing, thereby helping to alleviate the national, state, and local nursing faculty shortage.
- ◆ In addition to on-line programs, UNA offers many on-line services such as on-line applications, on-line continuing studies, and on-line payment options.
- ◆ The College of Business delivers undergraduate programs in Management and Marketing in the evenings to make these programs more accessible to working adults.
- ◆ UNA's Early Scholars program permits intellectually advanced high school students to begin their college careers while still attending high school. These early scholars attend classes on the UNA campus with other college students and are quickly socialized into the college learning environment. Over 230 Early Scholar students enrolled in both fall 2005 and 2006 semesters.
- ◆ Kilby Child Development Center (CDC) has a program for three- and four-year-old children. The Pre-K four-year-old program is presently state funded and free to participants.

## Goal 2 – Cooperation

**Offer relevant educational programs that address economic, intellectual, and social problems by partnering with business, government, K-12, and private sector entities.**

*University of North Alabama accomplishments:*

- ◆ The College of Business has created the “Center for Business Valuation Research and Education” to work with finance and accounting professionals, providing CEU credit and to provide consulting services.
- ◆ The College of Education, in response to needs of the In-service Center, supported the purchase/renovation of a 60,000 sq. ft. facility to house AMSTI/ASIM, ARI, TIM and ARIC. These state programs bring new and innovative best practices to K-12 teachers in a six-county area of northwest Alabama.
- ◆ The College of Nursing and Allied Health partners with the City of Florence, Eliza Memorial Hospital, and Tri-County Dental Association in providing health care and dental services to the uninsured and underinsured population in our region and receives over \$300,000 in-kind services provided by various segments of the community.
- ◆ The College of Nursing and Allied Health participates and supports the State Transfer and Articulation System to allow ease of transfer of community college students who wish to obtain the baccalaureate degree in Nursing. This effort allows for easier access of associate degree nurses to obtain higher degrees, increasing the pipeline for nurse managers, administrators, faculty, practitioners, and other advanced care givers.
- ◆ In cooperation with the Alabama Department of Youth Services, UNA sponsors a group home for youthful adjudicated females, providing guidance and developmental opportunities for them to emerge into responsible adulthood.
- ◆ The College of Business has partnered with Marriott, Inc. & Affiliates to provide students with co-op work-study opportunities in hospitality management.
- ◆ The College of Business, in cooperation with area businesses, has increased internship opportunities by almost 50 percent over the past four years.
- ◆ The College of Education has created action research partnerships with early childhood teachers at West Elementary School in Russellville, Forest Hills Elementary School in Florence, and Webster Elementary School in Muscle Shoals.

- ◆ UNA's Army ROTC program has produced over 1,000 commissioned officers for the nation's defense, including six who have risen to the rank of general.
- ◆ Through cooperation with the private sector, UNA students in the Entertainment Industry Center have access to one of the finest music recording studios in the nation.
- ◆ UNA conducts various community-centered conferences such as the Wound Management conference and the Occupational Safety and Health Seminar.

### **Goal 3 – Quality**

**Strengthen instructional programs, evaluate and assess their effectiveness, and use the results to improve quality.**

*University of North Alabama accomplishments:*

- ◆ The University is implementing a brand new, fully integrated model for planning, budgeting, and assessing as outlined in the *Strategic Plan and Guide for Planning and Assessing Institutional Effectiveness*, adopted by the Board of Trustees in June 2007.
- ◆ UNA offers faculty development opportunities through different funding sources (e.g., faculty development funds at the college level, internal research funds, and faculty leave program) to strengthen classroom instruction and curriculum.
- ◆ UNA has taken advantage of national assessment instruments to measure the effectiveness of the institution. For example, the National Survey of Student Engagement measures student/faculty interaction, the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency exams evaluate student learning in core subject areas, and the Graduating Senior Survey allows UNA to evaluate students' overall experience at the institution.
- ◆ UNA's Industrial Hygiene program is one of only five accredited undergraduate programs in the United States, and the only one in the Southeast.
- ◆ UNA offers nationally accredited programs in Art, Business, Chemistry, Education, Industrial Hygiene, Music, Nursing, and Social Work.
- ◆ The Interior Design concentration in the Department of Human and Environmental Sciences is endorsed by the National Kitchen and Bath Association.



- ◆ The College of Nursing and Allied Health has continued to transform its programming to meet the needs and demands of society in the face of increasing nursing shortages. As the National State Board of Nursing has twice adjusted its exam passing standards upward within the last three years, the nursing program has introduced a program exit survey for all graduates.
- ◆ The College of Business has undertaken formal benchmarking studies for the past two years to identify strengths and areas in need of improvement for our undergraduate and graduate programs. The results compare our performance with a group of peer institutions from the southeast as well as around the nation.
- ◆ In order to improve the clinical components of its courses, the College of Nursing and Allied Health is using an advanced computer simulator model patient which allows students to practice on various patient scenarios before entering clinical agencies.
- ◆ The College of Business has initiated steps to seek AACSB accreditation. Only approximately 15 percent of business schools around the world are accredited by the AACSB.
- ◆ The Department of Counselor Education within the College of Education is pursuing initial accreditation with the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs.
- ◆ The Department of Computer Information Systems is actively seeking ABET accreditation for our information systems program.

## **Goal 4 – Resources**

**Strive for a sustained level of funding that will allow citizens to reach educational objectives, attain cultural and social goals, and position Alabama to compete economically in the region.**

*University of North Alabama accomplishments:*

- ◆ Reallocation of funds for the new scholarship programs to maximize resources.
- ◆ Kilby School received funds from a local state representative and a state senator as well as reading materials from Pearson Learning Corporation to support the implementation of the Alabama Reading Initiative.
- ◆ The College of Nursing and Allied Health received two important grants. A \$10,233 grant from Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments (NACOLG) will support providing care for the aging population in our local region. A three-year grant totaling \$885,189 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Sciences will help UNA further extend opportunities for minority students who wish to enter the nursing program.

- ◆ The on-line MBA and Asia-MBA are market driven programs that generate a positive cash flow that is reinvested in improving the quality of all programs in the College of Business as well as helping to cover other University fixed costs.
- ◆ The College of Business has increased the endowment for endowed faculty chairs from approximately \$1.5 million to approximately \$3.5 million over the past three years.
- ◆ UNA has used its resources to add to or enhance services for students in the areas of the infirmary, orientation, academic tutoring, study skills workshops, services related to physically and learning challenged students, substance abuse and wellness programs, student judicial system, learning communities, and faculty mentoring.

## **Goal 5 – Workforce Development**

**Enhance economic prosperity by involving all segments of public education in Alabama’s economic future.**

*University of North Alabama accomplishments:*

- ◆ All students in UNA’s Department of Geography receive extensive training in geospatial technologies, which the U.S. Department of Labor has identified as one of the three most important emerging fields of work. Graduates of the program go to work in challenging positions with a variety of employers including local governments, public utilities, and consulting firms. Many of these job opportunities reside in Alabama.
- ◆ In addition to providing hospitals and other health care providers with high quality continuing education opportunities, UNA is the largest provider of professional, advanced degree nurses within this region.
- ◆ The College of Education secured approval to begin offering a curriculum option in the Culinary Arts in response to the growing need for trained professionals in the food industry.
- ◆ UNA offers a new Career Services website with helpful information for students and recent graduates on finding employment after graduation.
- ◆ The College of Business and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) have invested approximately \$30,000 for research databases in the past year to use in training in the Center for Business, Valuation Research, and Education.
- ◆ The College of Business and the SBDC actively support individual consulting for small business in the UNA service region and typically conduct non-credit training for at least 500 individuals per year.